

LCQ3: Community Care Fund

Following is a question by the Hon Joseph Lee Kok-long and a written reply by the Secretary for Home Affairs, Mr Tsang Tak-sing, in the Legislative Council today (April 6):

Question:

The Chief Executive announced in his 2010-2011 Policy Address the setting up of a Community Care Fund (the Fund), to which the Government and the business sector would each contribute \$5 billion, to support people in need in areas not covered by the Comprehensive Social Security Assistance Scheme. It has been reported that a number of charity organisations reflected earlier that after the Government's announcement of the establishment of the Fund, some consortia had explicitly indicated that they might reduce their donations to these organisations as they had to contribute to the Fund. On the other hand, the Financial Secretary has recently proposed to inject additional money into the Fund (it has been reported that the amount earmarked for such purpose will be over \$1 billion) to help those who are unable to benefit from his proposed disbursement of \$6,000 to each permanent resident of Hong Kong but in need of financial assistance. Some members of the public worry that such a move may further reduce the consortia's desire to make donations to charity organisations, making fundraising more difficult for those charity organisations which mainly provide services to non-permanent residents in need. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

- (a) whether it knows the figures on the donations raised by the major charity organisations in Hong Kong in the past three years; whether the donations received by these organisations have dwindled after the Government's announcement of the establishment of the Fund; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;
- (b) apart from the undertaking of the Chief Secretary for Administration that he would, as Chairman of the Steering Committee on the Community Care Fund, write to business corporations appealing to them that their contributions to the Fund should be made on top of their regular support for charities, how the authorities will encourage business corporations not to cut their donations to charity organisations for the reason that they have contributed to the Fund;

(c) whether the authorities have established communication channels for charity organisations to relay to them their difficulties in fundraising and operations after the Government's announcement of the establishment of the Fund; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; given that the fundraising performance of charity organisations have direct impact on the community services they provide, whether the authorities will offer relevant assistance or support to the seriously affected charity organisations; if they will, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(d) given that the authorities have proposed to inject \$1 billion additional money into the Fund to help those in need, whether such a move will deviate from the original purpose of setting up the Fund; if not, of the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

(a) In general, the figures on the donations received by charitable organisations each year are available for public information at their annual reports and web pages. The fund-raising results and the levels of donations of charitable organisations also vary from time to time and depend on many different factors.

(b) When the Chairman of the Steering Committee on the Community Care Fund (CCF) wrote to the business sector to appeal for donations earlier, it was already emphasised that donations to the CCF should be made on top of donors' regular support for charities. Moreover, the CCF would not launch public fund-raising campaigns.

(c) The Administration has maintained close liaison with charitable organisations. Charitable organisations are also welcome to share their experiences with the CCF and offer valuable comments on fostering a caring culture and assisting the underprivileged.

(d) The main objective of the CCF is to provide assistance to people facing economic difficulties, in particular those who fall outside the social safety net or those within the safety net but have special circumstances that are not covered. The Government's plan to inject additional money into the CCF to help those who have special needs is in line with the objective of the CCF.

Ends/Wednesday, April 6, 2011

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